

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS (listing):

Claims 1-24 (Cancelled)

25. (Currently amended) A method for controlled filtering a portion of contents data in reproducing or distributing,

wherein, the contents data comprises a plurality of portions, and control information specifying predetermined filtering for a predetermined portion has been embedded in the contents data as a digital watermark;

said method comprising the steps of:

retaining level information in a terminal involved in the reproducing or distributing of the contents data;

obtaining level information retained in the terminal;

extracting the control information from the contents data;

deciding how to execute the predetermined filtering for the predetermined portion of the contents data based on the extracted control information and the obtained level information;

filtering the predetermined portion of the contents data according to the decision; and

reproducing or distributing the contents data with the filtered predetermined portion and at least one unfiltered portion.

26. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 25, wherein the predetermined portion of the contents data is a portion of the contents data where the control information has been extracted from.

27. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 25, wherein:

the control information includes one or more items of level information for determining whether the predetermined filtering is to be applied to the predetermined portion of the contents data; and

the deciding step comprises determining whether the predetermined filtering is applied to a specific portion of the contents, based on one or more items of the level information included in the control information.

28. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 27, wherein:

the level information included in the control information comprises information about a level of the contents user; and

the determining step comprises comparing the level of the contents user specified by the level information included in the control information with ~~a level of~~ a registered level of an actual contents user indicated by the obtained level information; and determining whether the predetermined filtering is applied to the predetermined portion of the contents data based on a result of the comparison.

29. (Currently Amended) A method ~~data~~ according to claim 27, wherein:

the level information included in the control information comprises information about a level of a contents distributor; and

the determining step comprises comparing the level of the contents distributor specified by the level information included in the control information with a level of a contents distributor

that is distributing the contents indicated by the obtained level information; and determining whether the predetermined filtering is applied to the predetermined portion of the contents data based on a result of the comparison.

30. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 27, wherein:

the level information included in the control information comprises information about a predetermined period of use of the contents data; and

the determining step comprises comparing the period specified by the level information with the current date and time; and determining whether the predetermined filtering is applied to the predetermined portion of the contents data based on a result of the comparison.

31. (Currently Amended) A method ~~according to claim 27 wherein:~~ for controlled filtering a portion of contents data in reproducing or distributing,

wherein, the contents data comprises a plurality of portions, and control information specifying predetermined filtering for a predetermined portion has been embedded in the contents data as a digital watermark;

said method comprising the steps of:

extracting the control information from the contents data, wherein the control information includes one or more items of level information for determining whether the predetermined filtering is to be applied to the predetermined portion of the contents data; and the level information comprises information about a maximum number of times the contents are replayed;
and

deciding how to execute the predetermined filtering for the predetermined portion of the contents data based on the extracted control information, wherein the deciding step comprises determining whether the predetermined filtering is applied to a specific portion of the contents, based on one or more items of the level information included in the control information; and the determining step comprises comparing the maximum number of times the contents are replayed as specified by the level information included in the control information and the number of times a contents user has replayed the contents data; and determining whether the predetermined filtering is applied to the predetermined portion of the contents data based on a result of the comparison;

filtering the predetermined portion of the contents data according to the decision; and reproducing or distributing the contents data with the filtered predetermined portion and at least one unfiltered portion.

32. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 27, wherein:
the level information comprises region information included in the control information;
and

the determining step comprises comparing the region specified by the level information included in the control information and a region where a contents user resides indicated by the obtained level information; and determining whether the predetermined filtering is applied to the predetermined portion of the contents data based on a result of the comparison.

33. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for controlled filtering a portion of contents data,

wherein, the contents data comprises a plurality of portions, and control information specifying predetermined filtering of a predetermined portion has been embedded in the contents data as a digital watermark;

said apparatus comprising:

an extracting unit that extracts control information from the contents data;

a deciding unit that obtains level information from a terminal involved in reproducing or distributing the contents data and decides how to execute the predetermined filtering for the predetermined portion of the contents data based on the extracted control information and the obtained level information; and

a filtering unit that filters the predetermined portion of the contents data according to the decision and outputs the filtered portion of the contents data together with at least one unfiltered portion of the contents data.

34. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 33, further comprising a reproducing unit that reproduces the output contents data.

35. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein:

the control information includes one or more items of level information for determining whether the predetermined filtering is to be applied to the predetermined portion of the contents data; and

the ~~filtering~~ deciding unit compares at least one level specified by the one or more items of level information included in the control information with at least one level specified by the ~~information set on the apparatus~~ obtained level information, and

the ~~filtering~~ deciding unit determines whether predetermined filtering is applied to the predetermined portion of the contents data.

36. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 35, wherein the at least one level specified by the one or more items of information included in the control information comprises one or more items from the group consisting essentially of: contents user level, contents distribution level, period of contents use, maximum number of contents replays, and region.

37. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein:
the apparatus is coupled to a network; and
the apparatus further comprises a distribution unit to distribute the filtered contents data to a contents user's terminal via the network.

38. (Currently Amended) A program product for controlled filtering a portion of contents data in reproducing or distributing, wherein, the contents data comprises a plurality of portions, and control information specifying predetermined filtering of a predetermined portion has been embedded in the contents data as a digital watermark, said product comprising:

a computer readable medium; and
code embodied in the medium, execution of the code causing implementation of the steps comprising:

obtaining level information retained in a terminal involved in the reproducing or distributing of the contents data;

extracting the control information from the contents data;
deciding how to execute the predetermined filtering for the predetermined portion of the contents data based on the extracted control information and the obtained level information;
filtering the predetermined portion of the contents data according to the decision; and
reproducing or distributing the contents data for the terminal with the predetermined filtered portion and at least one unfiltered portion.

39. (Previously presented) The program product of claim 38, wherein the computer readable medium is a computer readable medium for storing the code.

40. (Previously presented) A program product of claim 38, wherein the computer readable medium is a computer readable medium for transmitting the code.

41. (Previously presented) A contents rendering control method for tailoring of electronic data by which contents to be reproduced or distributed are represented,

the electronic data having been prepared with control information embedded as digital watermarks, the control information specifying application of predetermined filtering to predetermined parts of the electronic data and level information including a maximum number of times the contents may be replayed,

the contents rendering control method comprising:

before reproducing or distributing contents from the electronic data detecting the control information from the electronic data;

comparing the maximum number of times the contents may be replayed as specified in the level information included in the detected control information and number of times a contents user has replayed the contents from the electronic data, to determining whether to apply filtering; and

if the comparing step results in a determination to apply filtering, applying the predetermined filtering specified by the control information to specific parts of the contents.

42. (Previously presented) A method for controlled filtering of at least one of a plurality of blocks of contents data from a content stream comprising a plurality of blocks of contents data, in reproducing or distributing,

wherein control information regarding filtering has been embedded as a digital watermark, in one or more of the blocks of contents data;

said method comprising the steps of:

examining each of the blocks of contents data for a digital watermark;

extracting control information including level information from an examined block having an embedded digital watermark;

obtaining level information from a terminal involved in the reproducing or distributing of the contents data;

processing the extracted ~~control~~ level information and the obtained level information to determine whether to apply filtering, and processing the extracted control information to identify at least one of the blocks of contents data to which filtering is to be applied;

filtering the contents data of the identified at least one block; and

reproducing or distributing contents data from the plurality of blocks of the content stream including the filtered contents data and contents data of one or more unfiltered blocks.

43. (Previously presented) The method of claim 42, wherein the filtering step comprises applying a predetermined one of a plurality of filtering techniques, specified in the extracted control information, to the at least one block, based on the extracted control information.

44. (Previously presented) A program product comprising a computer readable medium and executable code embedded in the medium for implementing the method of claim 42.

45. (Previously presented) The method of claim 42, wherein:
the stream of contents data comprises a Motion Pictures Experts Group (MPEG) data stream; and
the blocks of contents data comprise MPEG macroblocks.

46. (Previously presented) The method of claim 42, wherein:
the contents data includes image data; and
the predetermined filtering comprises image processing for selective image-rendering control.

47. (Previously presented) A method for controlled filtering of contents data in reproducing or distributing, wherein:

control information specifying predetermined filtering has been embedded in the contents data as a digital watermark; and

the control information comprises one or more items of level information for determining whether the predetermined filtering is to be applied to a specific portion of the contents data, including information about a maximum number of times the contents are replayed;

said method comprising the steps of:

extracting the control information from the contents data;

deciding how to execute the predetermined filtering of the contents data based on the extracted control information;

determining whether the predetermined filtering is to be applied to a specific portion of the contents, based on one or more items of the level information included in the control information, wherein the determining step comprises:

comparing the maximum number of times the contents are replayed as specified by the level information included in the control information and a number of times a contents user has replayed the contents from the electronic data in question; and

determining whether the predetermined filtering is applied to the specific portion of the contents;

upon determining to apply the predetermined filtering, filtering the specific portion of the contents data according to the decision as to how to execute the predetermined filtering; and

reproducing or distributing of the filtered contents data.